

Amendment**U.S. Patent Application No. 10/671,631****REMARKS**

Claims 1-17 are pending in the subject application. Claims 1-9 have been examined and stand rejected. By the above amendments, claim 1 has been amended, and new claims 10-17 have been added. Favorable reconsideration of the application and allowance of all of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,646,545 to Bligh. Further claims 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bligh, and claim 9 stands rejected as being unpatentable over Bligh in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,150,943 to Lehman. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections insofar as they apply to amended independent claim 1 and its dependent claims.

An important aspect of the present invention is that the emergency warning units of the emergency warning system include within a single unit both a sensor for detecting a hazard condition and luminous means which can be used in conjunction with adjacent units to form a running light. This scheme avoids the extensive cost of installing a separate LED display system, including the requisite wiring and power supply.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that individual emergency warning units are equipped with a sensor for detecting a hazard condition and luminous means. The amendment to claim 1 is supported in the specification at least on page 3, beginning on line 28, which describes “emergency warning units” as units which “respond to certain conditions such as temperature, smoke, flame, certain gases or other physical phenomena which are typical for hazards.” Further, on page 4, lines 11 and 12, “emergency warning units” are described as “smoke alarms” which are well known to necessarily utilize a sensor. In addition, on page 4, line 29, a “warning unit” is described as responding “to one or several phenomena that are the consequence of a fire (temperature, smoke, etc.) and sends a respective data message to the central system.” Moreover, Fig. 1 shows emergency warning units comprising smoke alarms (designated as reference numerals 11 and 12) sensing and responding to smoke in the area of the alarm.

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Bligh does not teach or suggest both a hazard sensor and luminous means in an individual emergency warning unit, as required by claim 1. Rather, Bligh discloses an evacuation signaling system comprising floor-mounted display units that are completely separate from a hazard detection or sensor system. As shown in Fig. 10 of Bligh, the LED display units 4 of the signaling system are connected to and controlled by a power supply/microprocessor 10. As explained at col. 4, lines 47-50, microprocessor 10 receives data from a structure's network of smoke/heat/CO₂/CO or related detectors via input connection 15. Further, the passage at col. 5, lines 56-67, makes it perfectly clear that Bligh's signaling system is distinct from the network of detectors. Thus, Bligh discloses that the display system is separate from the detector system. This separate arrangement is not surprising in Bligh's scheme, since sensors/detectors are generally mounted higher on walls or on ceilings, and Bligh expressly teaches that the described signaling system is advantageous because the display units are floor-mounted rather than wall-mounted or ceiling-mounted (see, e.g., col. 1, line 30 – 35; col. 5, line 55 – col. 6, line 4). Since Bligh fails to disclose or suggest a method involving equipping individual emergency warning units with a sensor for detecting a hazard condition and luminous means, wherein the luminous means can be activated to operate in the manner of a running light, claim 1 and dependent claims 2-8 should be patentable over Bligh. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 1-8.

The Examiner further relies on Lehman to reject dependent claim 9. Lehman is relied upon for a teaching of a manual, wall-mounted unit for directing evacuees to exits. However, like Bligh, Lehman fails to disclose or suggest a method involving equipping individual emergency warning units with a sensor for detecting a hazard condition and luminous means, wherein the luminous means of the individual emergency warning units can be activated to operate in the manner of a running light, as required by parent claim 1. Consequently, parent claim 1 and dependent claim 9 would not have been (and could not have been) obvious from any combination of Bligh and Lehman. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 9.

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New dependent claim 10 (10/1) requires mounting the emergency warning units on the ceiling (see, e.g., Applicant's Fig. 1). Bligh expressly teaches away from ceiling mounting the display units of the signaling system (which the Examiner equates with the claimed emergency warning units). New dependent claim 11 (11/1) requires supplying power to individual emergency warning units from the central emergency warning system, and new dependent claim 12 (12/1) requires the luminous means to blink upon activation.

New independent claim 13 sets forth an emergency warning system for signaling the direction of an escape route to be taken in an emergency in a building. The claimed system includes a plurality of emergency warning units arranged in a distributed manner throughout the building, wherein individual emergency warning units comprise: a sensor for detecting a hazard condition and luminous means, wherein, in response to receiving notification of a hazard condition detected by the sensor of an emergency warning unit, the emergency warning system activates the luminous means of the individual emergency warning units sequentially in the manner of a running light that designates at least one escape route leading away from a hazard site corresponding to the location of the emergency warning unit whose sensor detected the hazard condition. New dependent claim 14 (14/13) further requires at least some of the emergency warning units to be ceiling-mounted. These claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the reasons explained above with respect to claim 1.

New independent claim 15 sets forth a wall-mountable emergency warning unit for signaling the direction of an escape route to be taken in an emergency in a building. The claimed unit includes: a user interface for manually triggering an alarm, the emergency warning unit notifying an emergency warning system in response to the alarm being triggered; and first and second LED indicators in the form of arrows pointing in opposite directions, wherein one of the first and second LED indicators is activated by the emergency warning system in response to the alarm being triggered to designate an escape route leading away from a hazard site. An embodiment of the claimed unit is shown in Fig. 2, and support for claim 15 is found in various places throughout Applicant's specification.

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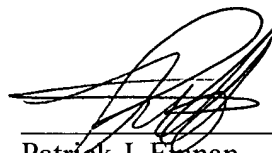
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New dependent claim 16 (16/15) requires the user interface to be a push button interface. Finally, new dependent claim 17 (17/15) sets forth an emergency warning system comprising a plurality of wall-mounted emergency warning units according to claim 15, wherein the emergency warning system activates one of the first and second LED indicators of individual emergency warning units sequentially in the manner of a running light that designates at least one escape route leading away from a hazard site. Neither Bligh nor Lehman discloses or suggests a wall-mounted emergency warning unit or a system comprising such units as recited in these claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant respectfully request the Examiner to find the application to be in condition for allowance with claims 1-17. However, if for any reason the Examiner feels that the application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the undersigned attorney to discuss any unresolved issues and to expedite the disposition of the application.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 05-0460.

Respectfully submitted,



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